

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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DHA-02 ORM-02 DIWY-01 /098 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4416

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC HONO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 24269

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VN, TH

SUBJECT: SOCIALISTS REPORT ON VISIT TO DRV

REF: A. BANGKOK 23598; B. BANGKOK 24097

SUMMARY: NORTH VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS AND MEDIA ARE PROVIDING DIFFERENT STORIES AS TO WHAT IS HOLDING UP CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN THEIR COUNTRY AND THAILAND. THIS RAISES THE QUESTION WHETHER THEY ARE INTERESTED IN IMPROVING RELATIONS AT THIS TIME. END SUMMARY.

1. RETURNING THAI SOCIALIST MPS WHO VISITED HANOI LAST WEEK RETURNED TO BANGKOK AND HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 9 REGARDING TRIP. THEY REPORTED THAT PREMIER PHAM VAN DONG EXPRESSED TO THEM HIS COUNTRY'S DESIRE FOR DIPLOMATIC AND TRADE RELATIONS AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES, BUT HE SAID THAILAND MUST FIRST RETURN SOUTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY
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EQUIPMENT. THIS APPARENTLY STRUCK A RESPONSIVE CHORD, AS

THE OPPOSITION DEPUTIES DUTIFULLY CALLED FOR THE RTG TO BE "FLEXIBLE" ON THE ISSUE.

2. THEY ALSO MET WITH NHAN DAN EDITOR HOANG TUNG DURING THEIR STAY. TUNG TOLD THEM THAT, UNLIKE U.S. TROOPS, THE 50,000 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WHO HAVE LONG BEEN IN THAILAND SHOULD NOT HAVE TO LEAVE SINCE THEY "CAME IN PEACE". (IN FACT, THEY CAME AS REFUGEES DURING THE INDO-CHINA WAR AGAINST THE FRENCH.) TUNG SAID THAT THE DRV OPPOSES THE FORMATION OF AN INDOCHINA FEDERATION AND SAID THIS IDEA IS A CIA PLOT.

3. FINALLY, THE GROUP SAID SENIOR OFFICIALS IN HANOI TOLD THEM THAT THAI JOURNALISTS AND WOMEN LEADERS ARE FREE TO VISIT NORTH VIET-NAM, AND THEY CAN OBTAIN VISAS IN VIENTIANE.

4. MEANWHILE, FINANCE MINISTER BUNCHU ROTCHANASATHIAN--A FOUNDING MEMBER OF PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT'S SOCIAL ACTION PARTY AND ONE OF KHUKRIT'S PRINCIPAL ADVISERS--WAS PROBABLY SPEAKING AUTHORITATIVELY WHEN HE SAID IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CHINESE-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER CHUNG HOA NOVEMBER 13 THAT HIS COUNTRY WILL NEGOTIATE FOR NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH VIET-NAM AFTER REUNIFICATION OCCURS, WHEN TIMING WILL BE MORE OPPORTUNE, RATHER THAN TRY TO NEGOTIATE NOW WITH TWO VIET-NAMS. HE MADE NO MENTION OF THE PLANES ISSUE.

5. COMMENT: DONG'S STATEMENT THAT RELATIONS HINGE ON SETTLEMENT OF THE PLANES ISSUE WAS MADE AT VIRTUALLY THE SAME TIME THAT NHAN DAN WAS BLAMING THE RTG FOR DELAYING TALKS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES BECAUSE IT WAS "BUSY WITH ITS AFFAIRS" (REF B). IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE USING TWO SEPARATE LINES WITH THE THAI, CALLING INTO QUESTION WHETHER THERE IS ANY REAL DESIRE ON THE NORTH VIETNAMESE PART FOR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AT THIS TIME. PERHAPS BUNCHU'S COMMENTS SUGGEST THAT KHUKRIT BELIEVES HIS GOVERNMENT CAN AFFORD TO WAIT, AS WELL. WHITEHOUSE

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